

July 8, 1974

Home Missions Enter
'Grass Roots' Politics

74-10

By Tim Nicholas
for Baptist Press

Southern Baptist home missionary Larry Baldrige is an active opponent of strip mining in Appalachia. As the pastor of Caney Baptist Church in Pippa Passes, Ky., a region gouged by strip mines, Baldrige has been called a Communist, and his life has been threatened because he decided to stand against the mines. He quickly points out, "I hate the mines, but I love the miners."

Baldrige, a Christian Social Ministries missionary in his late 30s, believes, "We've got to change this myth of Southern Baptists being concerned only with the soul and not the body."

"I don't see any inconsistency whatever in the Christian faith and politics, except that politics has been corrupted by Watergate and by the American system that says, 'Win at any cost.'"

Baldrige is one of many Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (HMB) missionaries active in the power structures that affect their lives and the lives of people around them.

He recently participated in a panel of protestant and Roman Catholic leaders who met in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains to discuss strip mining and the energy crisis.

After extensive hearings, they urged passage of strong federal legislation for reclamation of surface mined land.

Baldrige then represented the sponsoring groups--the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility in conjunction with the Commission on Religion in Appalachia--in Washington, D.C., for a national strategy-planning session on the strip mining issue.

Baldrige also did some unofficial lobbying with his congressman while in the nation's capital.

"I'm opposed to the abuses of strip mining; it's destroying the land, in a real sense, the people. Once you upset the ecology and nature, you upset the cultural system," says Baldrige, a native of Kentucky.

In Eastern Kentucky, Baldrige says, strip mining has been irresponsible and the companies have reacted only to direct confrontations. He advocates deep mining and urges that depletion taxes be returned to the counties rather than the states.

"There seems to be a real gap between Christian conscience and issues of social and economic justice," asserts Baldrige.

"Some people say, 'Southern Baptists don't do things like this,' or 'You don't fit the image,' Baldrige adds. "I try to explain that Southern Baptists are involved across the board in social, economic and political issues."

Arthur Rutledge, HMB director, says no rules exist to guide or limit missionary involvement in current affairs, political or otherwise, as long as the missionary "remembers who he is and who he represents."

The missionary's chief objectives are spiritual, Rutledge feels, and he must wrestle with priorities, but "I do not begrudge a missionary giving of his time to such a commitment."

No one knows exactly how many of the 2,200 HMB missionaries do get involved in political activity, on national, state or local levels, but dozens are.

Frank Thomas of Albuquerque, N.M., is on the city's housing authority. Allen Seward of Ignacio, Colo., chairs that city's public housing board for Indians. And John Hopkins of Kansas City, Kans., is on the executive committee and the board of directors of the county youth center.

Christian Social Ministries (CSM) missionaries have been among the most active in community affairs, especially in times of crisis.

When a fire last October destroyed 18 blocks of Chelsea, Mass., and 400 people lost everything they had, home missionary Jerry Edwards put on his clerical collar to get past the firemen and walked among homes determining immediate needs.

The U.S. Army gave him a lieutenant, a squad of men and two Army trucks to take people to a hospital and help them fill out forms for disaster relief.

"We opened our center for clothing and food distribution, and took in 17 tons of clothing which was sorted and boxed by 80 volunteers," says Edwards.

The mayor appointed him co-chairman of the finance committee for the disaster relief program. "I knew which churches had monies for such purposes," he explains.

But Edwards, area CSM director, doesn't wait for emergencies for community service. Last summer he and 16 student summer missionaries contact apartment owners in the low-income areas of Chelsea who donated building materials. The student missionaries' free labor repaired the buildings.

Edwards and others are delving into public service on a multitude of levels, bringing with them the message of Jesus-Christ. And lives are being changed, reports say.

Says Rutledge, "I am proud of and grateful for the host of missionaries whose Christian concern impels them into involvement in the life of their communities, states and nation."

He adds, "This is a growing expression of Christian compassion which can only do good."
(BP)

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Adapted from the July-August, 1974, issue of Home Missions magazine

ADD

Add as graphs 8 & 9 in BP story of July 1, 1974, headlined, 'Too Little Time, Money & Pulls on Ministers' Lives':

Georgia and North Carolina both provide some counseling and referrals. Georgia pastors can talk--individually or in small groups--with professional counselors at Georgia Baptist Hospital in Atlanta.

For two years retreats for pastors have been conducted under the leadership of Roy Hinchey, secretary of the church-ministers relations service, as part of the state missions program of Georgia Baptists. Thanks.

--Baptist Press



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July 8, 1974

Editor to Chair SBC
Name Change Committee

LUBBOCK, Tex. (BP)--Jaroy Weber, president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), has named C. R. Daley, editor of the Kentucky Western Recorder, as chairman of a seven member committee to evaluate the work of the SBC Executive Committee and to study a possible name change for the convention.

Other members of the committee are: Herschel H. Hobbs, Oklahoma City; Harold Bennett, Jacksonville, Fla.; Olin T. Binkley, Wake Forest, N. C.; Daniel R. Grant, Arkadelphia, Ark.; Miss Alma Hunt, Birmingham, Ala.; and W. A. Criswell, Dallas, Tex.

Criswell made the motion during the SBC meeting in Dallas recently for a committee to study the name change. The Executive Committee brought a recommendation that "a committee of seven persons widely experienced in denominational life--study and evaluate the Executive Committee in the light of Bylaw 9, which outlines the work of the Executive Committee, and report to the convention in 1975. None of the seven named are on the Executive Committee.

"I do not believe you could find a committee with wider experience and wider respect in Southern Baptist life than these seven who have accepted the responsibility," Weber said in announcing the committee.

Weber suggested that all who had comments on the name change or who wanted to make input on the work of the Executive Committee should write to Daley at Box 43401, Middletown Ky. 40243.

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First of two articles on student work in the SBC

SBC Student Ministries
Report Significant Growth

by James A. Lowry

NASHVILLE (BP)--Baptist student work has increased greatly since the Southern Baptist Convention's committee on student work reported in 1970 to the SBC in Denver, according to a statement released here.

Figures for 1974 reveal 749 student workers, including 328 volunteers, 99 part-time (part) and 322 full-time directors of student ministries, said Charles Roselle, secretary of National Student Ministries at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

In 1970, similar figures showed 516 student workers, including 172 volunteers, 77 part-time and 267 full-time directors of student ministries.

Organized student work has increased from 611 campuses in 1970 to 932 campuses in 1973.

"The report of the SBC student work committee provided a re-identification of emphases which is vital to any balanced student ministry," Roselle continued. "From that re-identification, programs, field services and budgets have been projected to maximize the results to the ministry."

Roselle reports that one of the most significant things in the expansion of student work is the utilization of volunteer workers. In fact, he said, volunteers, for the first time, outnumber full-time directors of student work.

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The volunteers, who serve without pay, are assisted by special training, resources and placement mailing lists the same as full-time workers. Many volunteers in areas new to Southern Baptists are pastors of churches and missions.

College town pastors, Roselle reports, presently do some of the most significant student work in the SBC.

"Pastors' and laymen's conferences are forms of field work sponsored by National Student Ministries and state departments of student work," he says.

"This, along with the encouragement of the organization of associational student work committees to plan and promote resources to get student work started on college campuses in associations, have greatly increased the effectiveness of student ministries," he said.

The report of the student work committee and the resulting re-identification of emphasis has enabled National Student Ministries, along with state conventions, local Baptist Student Unions (BSUs) and boards and agencies with responsibility for student ministries to work cooperatively, Roselle says.

A student work advisory group comprised of members of various boards and agencies involved in student work performs much of the coordination.

An example is the planning of "Freedom 76," a national meeting scheduled in San Antonio, Tex., Dec. 28, 1975-Jan. 1, 1976. It will deal with student and young adult involvement in the mission of the church.

College student ministries vary from a large campus with a highly organized BSU with 100 Bible discussion leaders to a BSU on a campus with no known Southern Baptist students.

"In the early years of BSUs in traditional Southern Baptist areas, no thought was given to organizing a student ministry without identifying a significant number of Southern Baptist students," Roselle recalled.

"Now there is a whole swing around," he said. "Any college or university is a likely place to begin a Baptist Student Union."

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James A. Lowry is information specialist at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn.

Foundation Gives \$100,000
To Stetson University

7/8/74

DELAND, Fla. (BP)--Stetson University here has been given a \$100,000 grant by the Kresge Foundation of Troy, Mich., to help with financing of the Baptist school's \$1.65 million activities center.

Announcement of the gift was made by William H. Baldwin, president and trustee of the Kresge Foundation, a private trustee corporation organized under the laws of Michigan, whose stated purpose is to "promote the well-being of mankind."

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SBC Cooperative Program
Receipts Show Increase

7/8/74

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget receipts increased over June of last year with designated receipts for the first nine months of the current fiscal year also up for the same period.

But designated receipts for the month of June were down from June, 1973.

Cooperative Program undesignated gifts convention-wide for June, 1974 were \$3,156,941 for an increase of \$161,797 and 5.4 per cent over June, 1973. Designated receipts for June were down \$19,018, with the month showing \$2,515,372 as compared with \$2,534,390 for the same month last year.

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Designated receipts for the fiscal year to date, however, were \$31,204,213 as compared with \$27,560,381 for the first nine months of the previous fiscal year. That constitutes an increase of \$3,643,832 or 13.22 per cent in designated gifts over the same span in 1973, according to John Williams, director of financial planning and assistant to the treasurer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

Undesignated and designated receipts combined for the current fiscal year to date, October, 1973 through June, 1974, were \$59,974,383 an increase of \$7,034,561 and 13.29 per cent. Cooperative Program ^{un}designated totals for October through June were \$28,770,170 for an increase of \$3,390,729 and 13.36 per cent over fiscal 1973.

Combined totals (designated and undesignated) for June were \$5,672,313, an increase of \$142,779 and 2.58 per cent.

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions total for 1974 to date was given as \$21,934,693, an increase of \$2,549,917 over 1973, and a percentage increase of 13.15. The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions total to date was \$7,103,104, for an increase over 1973 of \$1,093,875 and 18.20 per cent. Total gifts for other designated causes were \$2,166,416, an increase of only \$41.

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Nixon Aide Requests, Sent
Tape of Sermon on Truth

7/8/74

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (BP)--A Southern Baptist minister's sermon on truth was mailed to the White House after an aide of President Richard M. Nixon heard the message via radio here and asked for a tape.

John McLaughlin, the Nixon aide, was in the Key Biscayne area and heard William M. Hinson, the pastor of First Baptist Church here, during a recent Sunday morning broadcast.

Returning to the nation's capital, McLaughlin called the church and asked that a copy of the sermon be mailed to him at the White House.

The sermon, one of five in a series on truth, was titled "Truth Can Be Known." In it, Hinson said that truth is absolute. "Right is right...and it can be known...God is the plumbline."

Hinson said, "The 'Watergate Syndrome' has literally spread around the world. It's a sad commentary to hear statements like this, 'You can't trust any politician today,' or 'All public officials are crooks.' The basis for this cynicism is a question of right and wrong."

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CORRECTION

In the Baptist Press story dated July 3, 1974, headline "Sanchez Re-Named President By Texas Mexican Baptists," the first line should read "HOUSTON, Tex. (BP)--Rudy Sanchez, a Corpus Christi pastor, has been re-elected to a second" (instead of Houston pastor.) Thanks--Baptist Press